

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

----- 074300

R 030807Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4825

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 WARSAW 7867

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PL

SUBJ: THE CRISIS IN POLAND: A NATO CONSENSUS

1. EIGHT NATO CHIEFS OF MISSION RESIDENT IN WARSAW MET OCTOBER

29. PRESENT WERE THE AMBASSADORS OF BELGIUM, GREECE, ITALY,

THE NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, TURKEY, THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND THE

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UNITED STATES. (THERE ARE NO CANADIAN AND PORTUGUESE AMBASSADORS

AT THE MOMENT; THE DANISH AMBASSADOR WAS ACCOMPANYING HIS PRIME MINISTER, WHO WAS VISITING POLAND, AND THE FRG AMBASSADOR WAS ON CONSULTATIONS IN BONN.) THE FOLLOWING WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE MEETING.

2. THE CURRENT CRISIS IS MORE SERIOUS THAN THOSE OF 1956 OR 1970, BECAUSE: (A) THERE IS NO VISIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE PRESENT REGIME; (B) THERE IS A STRONG -- EVEN BITTER -- REJECTION OF THE REGIME BY A BROAD, INFORMAL OPPOSITION, WHICH EMBRACES THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS, THE PEASANTRY, THE INTELLECTUALS, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, THE CHURCH, AND REFORMIST COMMUNISTS (E.G., WLADYSLAW BIENKOWSKI); (C) THE REGIME IS AT AN IMPASSE. IT HAS NO NEW POLICY. A VERY DELICATE BALANCE EXISTS IN THE COUNTRY; THIS COULD EASILY BE UPSET -- IF IT WERE, THERE COULD BE A CATACLYSM.

3. CONTRARY TO SPECULATION IN THE WESTERN PRESS (E.G., FRANK-FURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, OCTOBER 20), THE REGIME DOES NOT NOW SEEM TO BE RESORTING TO A MORE REPRESSIVE COURSE. ON THE CONTRARY, IT CONTINUES TO TAKE GREAT PAINS TO AVOID ACTIONS WHICH COULD CONCEIVABLY LIGHT THE FUSE OF A SOCIAL EXPLOSION. THUS, WHEN CORRESPONDENTS OF FOREIGN NEWS ORGANIZATIONS BECAME AWARE OF ANTONI MACIEREWICZ'S ARREST, HE WAS RELEASED. GIEREK'S KATOWICE ADDRESS TO THE COAL MINERS (OCTOBER 14) HAD AN UNCHARACTERISTICALLY HARSH AND ACCUSATORY TONE. IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE OF OCTOBER 25, HOWEVER, HE WAS BACK ON THE SAFER GROUND OF ADMITTING THAT THE REGIME HAD MADE MISTAKES AND OF ASKING FOR POPULAR UNDERSTANDING.

4. DESPITE THE GRAVE DIFFICULTIES IN WHICH IT FINDS ITSELF, THE REGIME SEEKS INTENT UPON MAINTAINING ITS "WESTPOLITIK," EVEN IF IT MUST TEMPORARILY REDUCE THE TEMPO AND VOLUME OF THE IMPORTATION OF MAJOR PLANTS FROM THE WEST. TO ABANDON THIS POLICY NOW WOULD SERVE NOTICE ON THE PEOPLE THAT THEY MUST FORGET THE DREAM OF SATISFYING THEIR DEMANDS FOR MORE AND BETTER CONSUMER DURABLES. THE POPULAR REACTION WOULD BE DANGEROUS.

5. AT THE SAME TIME, IT APPEARS THAT THE USSR WILL HELP POLAND BY SUPPLYING FEED-GRAIN (THE FEELING WAS THAT BETWEEN ONE-MILLION AND 1.5- MILLION TONS WOULD BE DELIVERED). ONE AMBASSADOR HAD HEARD THAT, DURING JAROSZEWCZ'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, THE SOVIETS
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HAD AGREED TO MAINTAIN THE PRICE OF PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AT THE 1976 LEVEL THROUGHOUT THE REMAINDER OF THE 1976-80 FIVE-YEAR PLAN. (COMMENT: HIS COLLEAGUES EXPRESSED GREAT SKEPTICISM, SINCE ANY SUCH CONCESSION WOULD APPARENTLY HAVE PREDECENTIAL FORCE FOR THE OTHER CEMA CONSUMERS OF SOVIET OIL. THERE IS NOW, HOWEVER, A SERIOUS ENERGY SITUATION IN POLAND. THE GOP IS TRYING VARIOUS DEVICES TO LIMIT DOMESTIC COAL CONSUMPTION SO THAT MORE WILL BE AVAILABLE TO EXPORT FOR HARD

CURRENCY. IN SOME PLACES, E.G., WARSAW, COAL RATIONING HAS BEEN INTRODUCED AND HOUSEHOLDERS ARE RECEIVING ONLY ABOUT HALF OF THEIR ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HEATING. ACCORDING TO A RANKING OFFICIAL OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION, JOZEF PAJESTKA, BY 1980 POLAND WILL BE A NET IMPORTER OF FUEL FOR THE PRODUCTION OF ENERGY. POLAND'S MAJOR NEW COAL-MINING PROJECTS, LUBLIN AND BELCHATOW, ARE NOT EXPECTED TO BEGIN PRODUCING UNTIL 1981 OR '82. END COMMENT.)

6. CONTRARY TO THE FEAR EXPRESSED BY POLISH CITIZENS TO NORMAN DAVIES, WHO REPORTED IT IN AN OTHERWISE EXCELLENT RECENT ARTICLE IN THE LONDON TIMES, THE AMBASSADORS AGREED THAT THE LAST THING THE SOVIETS ARE LIKELY TO ATTEMPT IS ANY DIRECT OR FORCIBLE INTERVENTION IN POLISH AFFAIRS. THEY ARE EVERY BIT AS WELL AWARE AS THE PZPR POLITBIURO OF THE EXPLOSIVENESS OF THE SITUATION AND HAVE NO DESIRE TO END UP SHOOTING POLISH WORKERS, UNLESS THIS PROVES TO BE AN ABSOLUTELY UNAVOIDABLE NECESSITY.

7. I ASKED WHETHER ANY OF MY COLLEAGUES HAD AN EXPLANATION FOR THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET DEPUTY MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, COLONEL-GENERAL NIKOLAY ALEKSEYEV, IN THE COMPANY OF FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE SOVIET STATE PLANNING COMMITTEE GEORGIY TITOV, DURING A CALL ON JAROSZEWCZ OCTOBER 23. WE WERE DISINCLINED TO REGARD HIS PRESENCE HERE AS CONNECTED WITH THE SECURITY OF THE POLISH COMMUNIST REGIME OR OF THE SOVIET TROOPS STATIONED IN POLAND, SINCE WE WOULD NOT EXPECT THAT A VISIT FOR SUCH A PURPOSE WOULD BE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED OR WOULD INVOLVE A JOINT CALL ON THE POLISH PREMIER. ONE LINE OF SPECULATION WAS THAT THE SOVIETS WERE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF POLAND'S NEED FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE BY URGING ONCE MORE THE SWEEPING MODERNIZATION OF THE POLISH ARMY'S EQUIPMENT. UP TO NOW, THE POLISH REGIME HAS SUCCESSFULLY RESISTED THESE URGINGS.

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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW
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EXDIS

(COMMENT: WITH REGARD TO THE SUGGESTION IN MOSCOW 17087 THAT
THE SOVIETS MAY WISH TO HAVE A TREATY EXTENDING POLISH
DEFENSE OBLIGATIONS TO THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER, I FIND
IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD MAKE SO
INFLAMMATION A PROPOSAL--WARSAW 7862. END COMMENT.)

8. THERE WAS AGREEMENT THAT GIEREK'S VISIT TO MOSCOW
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NEXT WEEK SHOULD PROVIDE THE OCCASION FOR A MORE PRECISE
READING OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE POLISH-SOVIET
RELATIONSHIP.

9. SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES SAID THAT, IN VIEW OF THE
GRAVITY OF THE CRISIS, THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT
POLAND'S ABILITY TO REPAY THE DEBTS IT HAD CONTRACTED
IN THE WEST. I SAID THAT WE IN OUR EMBASSY HAD BEEN
CONSIDERING THIS QUESTION AND WERE COMING TO MAKE UP
THEIR MINDS WHETHER THEY WANTED TO ENCOURAGE THE
POLES TO CONTINUE THEIR "WESTPOLITIK" OR TO CONVINCE
THEM, PERHAPS SIMPLY BY FAILING TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT
THE PROBLEM, THAT THEY WOULD, AFTER ALL, EVENTUALLY HAVE
TO RESIGN THEMSELVES TO EXISTING WITHIN SOME SORT OF
AUTARKIC INTRA-CEMA SYSTEM. I SAID WE WERE STRUCK BY
THE ROUGH PARALLEL BETWEEN THE SITUATION IN WHICH
GERMANY FOUND ITSELF AFTER WORLD WAR I AND POLAND'S

PRESENT DILEMMA. IN THE 1920'S, THE EUROPEAN ALLIED POWERS WERE DEMANDING REPARATIONS FROM GERMANY, BUT REFUSING TO ACCEPT THE GERMAN EXPORTS WHICH WOULD HAVE ENABLED THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC TO PAY THOSE REPARATIONS. NOW, WE IN THE WEST HAVE ENCOURAGED POLAND TO BUY HEAVILY ON CREDIT IN THE WEST, BUT MAINTAIN A CLIMATE WHICH IS INHOSPITABLE TO THE POLISH EXPORTS WHICH CAN EARN THE MONEY NEEDED TO SERVICE THE DEBT. I SAID THAT I WAS CONSCIOUS OF SUCH DEFECTS IN U.S. TRADE POLICY. QUITE APART FROM THE GOLF-CART CASE, THERE WAS THE POLISH FEAR THAT OUR PROPOSED NEW REGULATIONS ON COUNTERVAILING DUTIES WOULD NEGATE THE BENEFITS OF MFN STATUS (WARSAW 7820). I SAID THAT THE U.S. HALD ONLY A SMALL SHARE OF POLAND'S DEBT TO THE INDUSTRIALIZED WEST (ALMOST ALL EXTENDED BY PRIVATE U.S. BANKS), WHILE WESTERN EUROPE HELD MOST OF THE REST. (COMMENT: THERE SEEMED TO BE GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH THIS STATEMENT, BUT I DID NOT HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ANY OF MY COLLEAGUES (WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTVN OF THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR) WOULD MAKE A RELEVANT RECOMMENDATION TO HIS GOVERNMENT. (WE ARE PREPARING A FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THIS SUBJECT, WHICH SHOULD BE SENT TO THE DEPARTMENT SHORTLY.) END COMMENT.)

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10. FINALLY, THERE WAS AGREEMENT THAT THIS WINTER IS GOING TO BE A TESTING TIME FOR THE POLISH REGIME. THE MOST OPTIMISTIC THOUGHT THAT ANY OF US COULD MUSTER WAS THAT THE POLES MIGHT SOMEHOW BE ABLE TO MUDDLE THROUGH.

11. COMMENT: ONE OF THE THEORISTS OF THE POLISH INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (I HAVE FORGOTTEN HIS NAME) WROTE THAT THE FIRST STEP IN REGAINING POLAND'S FREEDOM WOULD BE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE PEOPLE'S CONSENT TO BE GOVERNED BY THE PARTITIONING POWERS. A VERY LARGE PART OF THE POLISH PEOPLE HAS NOW WITHDRAWN ITS CONSENT FROM THE PRESENT REGIME. THE LEADERSHIP CONTINUES TO ASK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTS ITNFERSUES ITS VISION OF

CONSTRUCTION A MODERN, FULLY INDUSTRIALIZED STATE. THE PEOPLE, HOWEVER, CONSIDER THAT THE PRICE-RISE PROPOSAL OF JUNE 24 WAS THE PROOF THAT GIEREK WAS GOING BACK ON HIS PROMISE TO RAISE THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING. THAT GOAL, AND IT ALONE, IS NOW CAPABLE OF MOTIVATING THE POLISH PEOPLE. APPEALS TO WORK FOR THE REALIZATION OF ANY OTHER GOAL FALL ON DEAF EARS. FOLLOWING THE "POLISH OCTOBER" OF 1956, IT WAS POSSIBLE

FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS TO MOBILIZE THE ENERGIES OF
THE POLISH PEOPLE, WHO FELT THAT, AFTER THE REMOVAL OF
THE "MUSCOVITE" LEADERSHIP OF BIERUT-BERMAN, THEY WERE
WORKING FOR A POLISH NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT. FOLLOW-
ING DECEMBER, 1970, MOBILIZATION WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY A
DIRECT APPEAL TO THE DESIRE TO OWN A CAR, BUILD A
HOUSE, BUY A TELEVISION SET, EAT WELL. FOLLOWING JUNE,
1976, THERE APPEARS TO BE NO NEW APPEAL BY WHICH THE
NATIONAL ENERGY--WHICH REMAINS POTENTIALLY AS
PRODUCTIVE AS EVER--CAN BE MOBILIZED. THAT IS WHY
THERE IS HERE A STRONG SENSE OF FOREBODING WHEN THE
MAN-IN-THE-STREET SAYS THAT THE OCCURRENCE OF
OPPOSITIONIST ACTIONS IN OCTOBER, DECEMBER, AND JUNE
STILL LEAVES NINE MORE MONTHS OF THE YEAR IN WHICH
SOMETHING CAN HAPPEN IN POLAND. END COMMENT.

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